



The Comic Rack

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THE PUNISHER 2099



THE SECRET OF SYNCHRON

DIRECT EDITION

02311



59606 01159

HIS FAMILY WAS MURDERED BY A PSYCOPATH IN AN AGE WHERE JUSTICE CAN BE BOUGHT AND NO ONE BELIEVES IN OLD-FASHIONED PUNISHMENT ANYMORE... NO ONE EXCEPT JAKE GALLOW'S... A WEAPONS SPECIALIST IN THE PUBLIC EYE POLICE BY DAY, AT NIGHT HE IS INCORRUPTIBLE JUSTICE.

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE PUNISHER

GHOST IN THE MACHINE!

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST IN JAKE GALLOW'S BANK ACCOUNT?

NOTHING TO SAY, HUH? AH, WELL... I'LL JUST HAVE TO BEAT IT OUT OF YOU, PUNK!

TRY IT, PUNISHER... I'LL BEAT YOU RIGHT BACK AND FIND OUT WHY YOU'RE SO INTERESTED IN GALLOW'S!

PAT
MILLS & SKINNER
WRITERS

SIMON
COLEBY
PENCILS

KEITH
WILLIAMS
INKS

PHIL
FELIX
LETTERS

IAN
LAUGHLIN
COLOR

MAI
MORRA
ACCEPTOR

JOEY
CAVALIERI
GROUPER

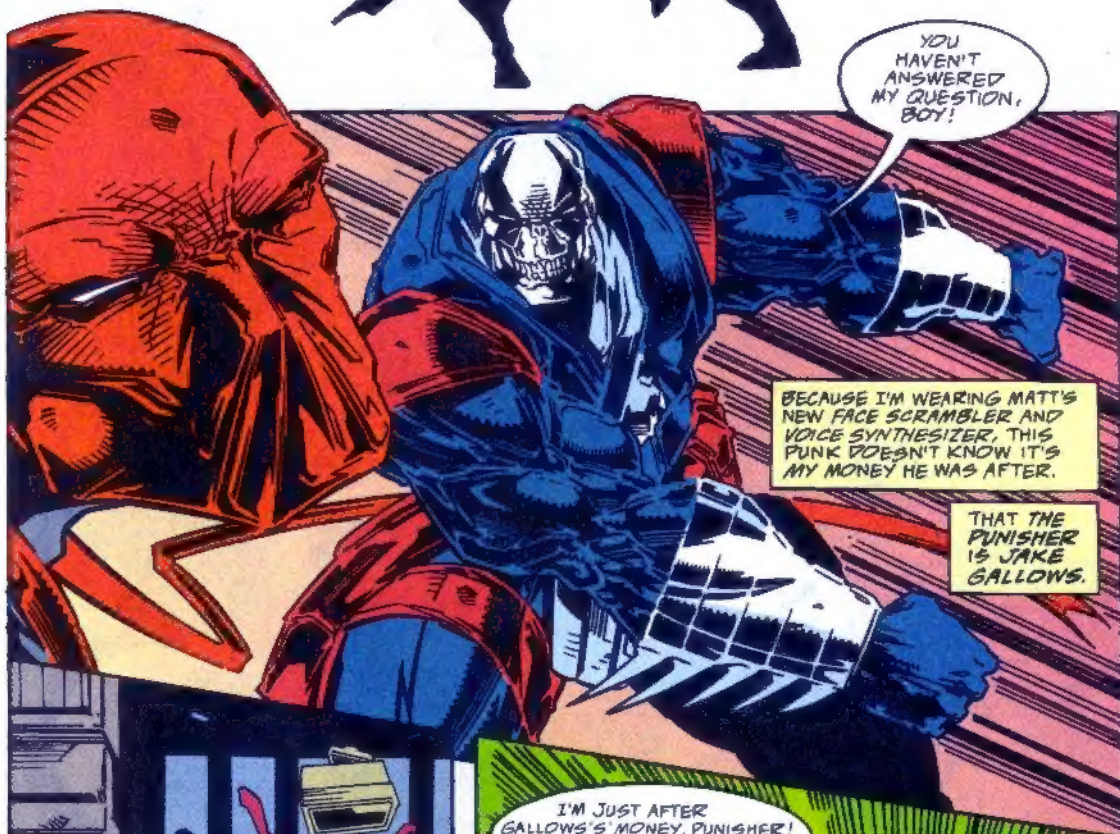
TOM
DEBALCO
MR. ED.



NO WAY I'M
LETTING THE
PUNISHER KNOW
JAKE GALLOW'S
WAS MY
DAD...

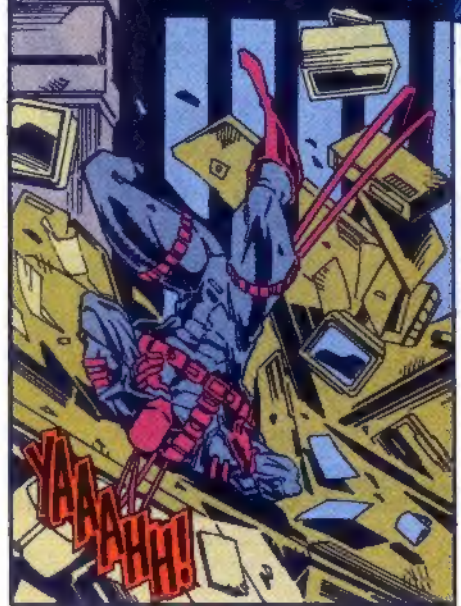
...WHEN HE
COULD BE
BOTHERED TO
SPEND TIME
WITH ME,
THAT IS!

YOU
HAVEN'T
ANSWERED
MY QUESTION,
BOY!



BECAUSE I'M WEARING MATT'S
NEW FACE SCRAMBLER AND
VOICE SYNTHESIZER, THIS
PUNK DOESN'T KNOW IT'S
MY MONEY HE WAS AFTER.

THAT THE
PUNISHER
IS JAKE
GALLOW'S.



I'M JUST AFTER
GALLOW'S MONEY, PUNISHER!
AND I'M WALKING OUT OF
HERE WITH IT!

GET IN MY
WAY AND I'LL BLOW
YOU TO ATOMIC
DUST!



BY THE WAY...
MY NAME'S NOT
PUNK... IT'S NOT-
WIRE! THE
ENERGY BEAM
TELLS YOU
WHY!

UUUUSH...!
KEEP IT UP, KID...
I KNOW WHERE
YOUR ENERGY COMES
FROM... IT'S HOW
YOU FLY THE
WIRES!

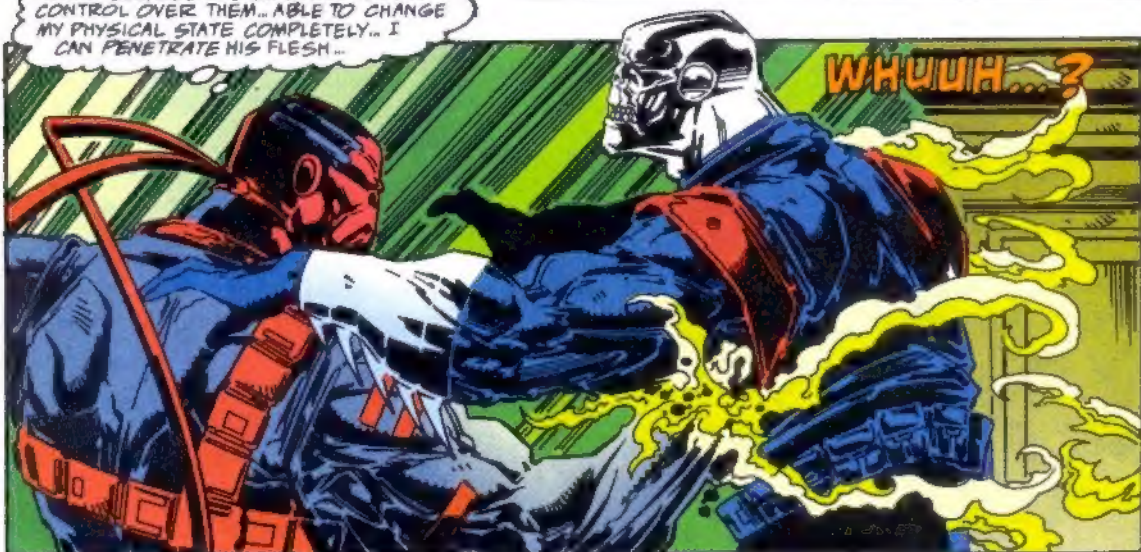
...AND BECAUSE I'VE GOT ALLOTROPIC
CONTROL OVER THEM... ABLE TO CHANGE
MY PHYSICAL STATE COMPLETELY... I
CAN PENETRATE HIS FLESH...

ONE MORE ZAP LIKE
THAT AND YOU'LL START
LOSING FINGERS!

HE'S RIGHT -- THIS ENERGY COMES
FROM MY BODY... "T.C." -- TOTAL
CONVERSION. I'M ABLE TO CONVERT
MATTER DIRECTLY INTO ENERGY.



TROUBLE IS... IT'S
MY MATTER GONNA
HAVE TO FINISH HIM
OFF WITH MY
HANDS...





...GRASP HIS
HEART...
AND
SQUEEZE!



UUUUUHHH!

HAVING A MASSIVE
CORONARY... GOT ONLY
SECONDS TO LIVE.

BUT AT LEAST I CAN
TAKE HIM WITH ME...
MY SUIT'S ENERGY
ACCUMULATORS HAVE
ABSORBED HIS
ENERGY BLAST...

I CAN GIVE IT
TO HIM RIGHT
BACK THROUGH
MY CYBORG
HAND.



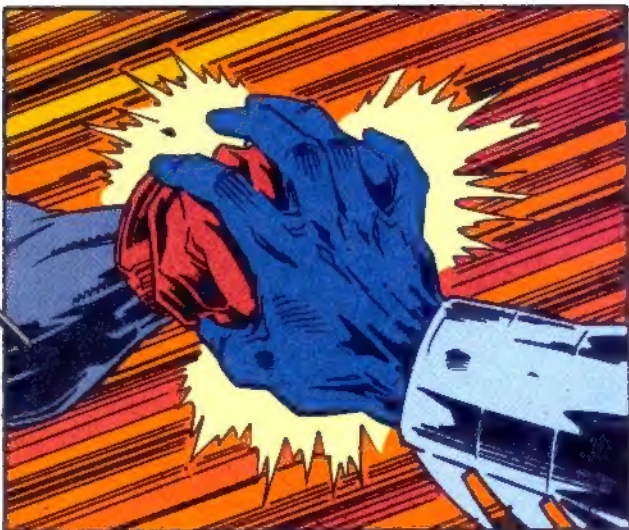
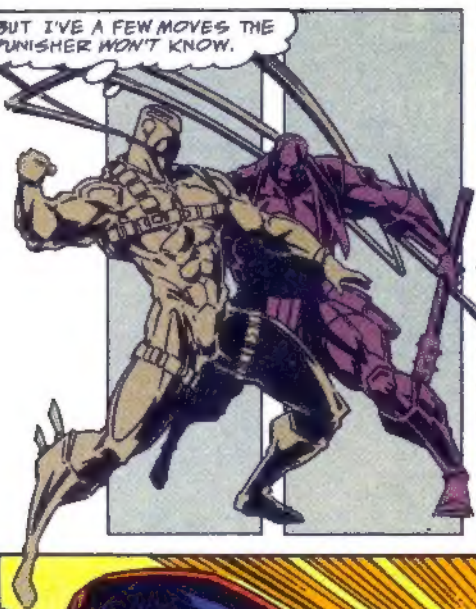
AAAGGHH!
HOW..?



TOUGHER
THAN YOU
THOUGHT,
EH, SON?



BUT I'VE A FEW MOVES THE PUNISHER WON'T KNOW.

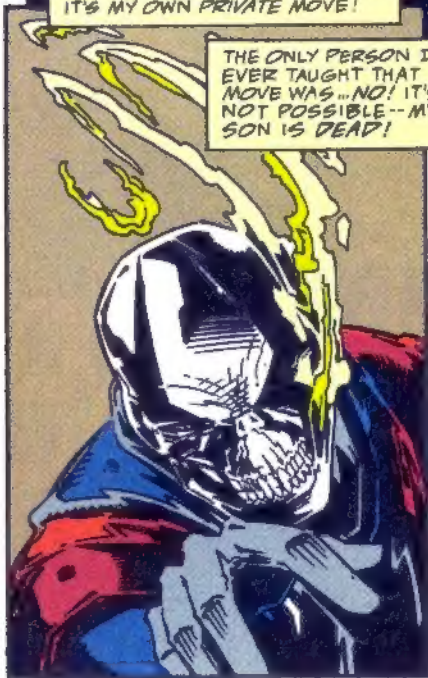


HOW THE--
NNNFF!



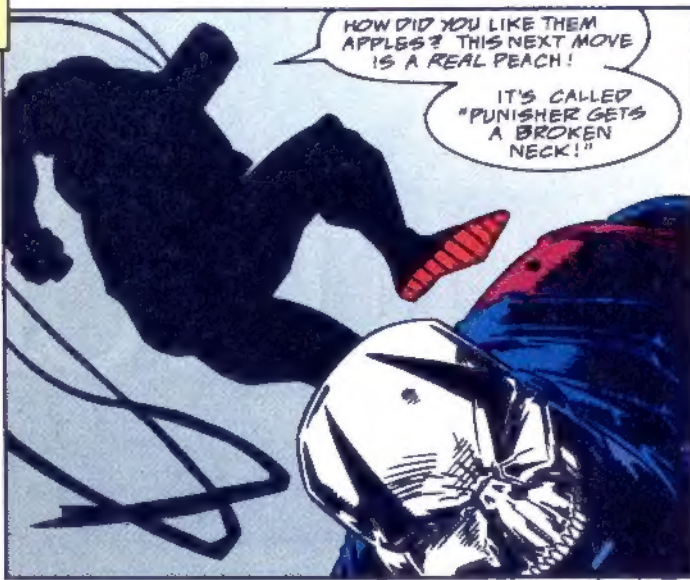
HOW DID HE KNOW TO DO THAT?
IT'S MY OWN PRIVATE MOVE!

THE ONLY PERSON I
EVER TAUGHT THAT
MOVE WAS...NO! IT'S
NOT POSSIBLE--MY
SON IS DEAD!



HOW DID YOU LIKE THEM
APPLES? THIS NEXT MOVE
IS A REAL PEACH!

IT'S CALLED
"PUNISHER GETS
A BROKEN
NECK!"



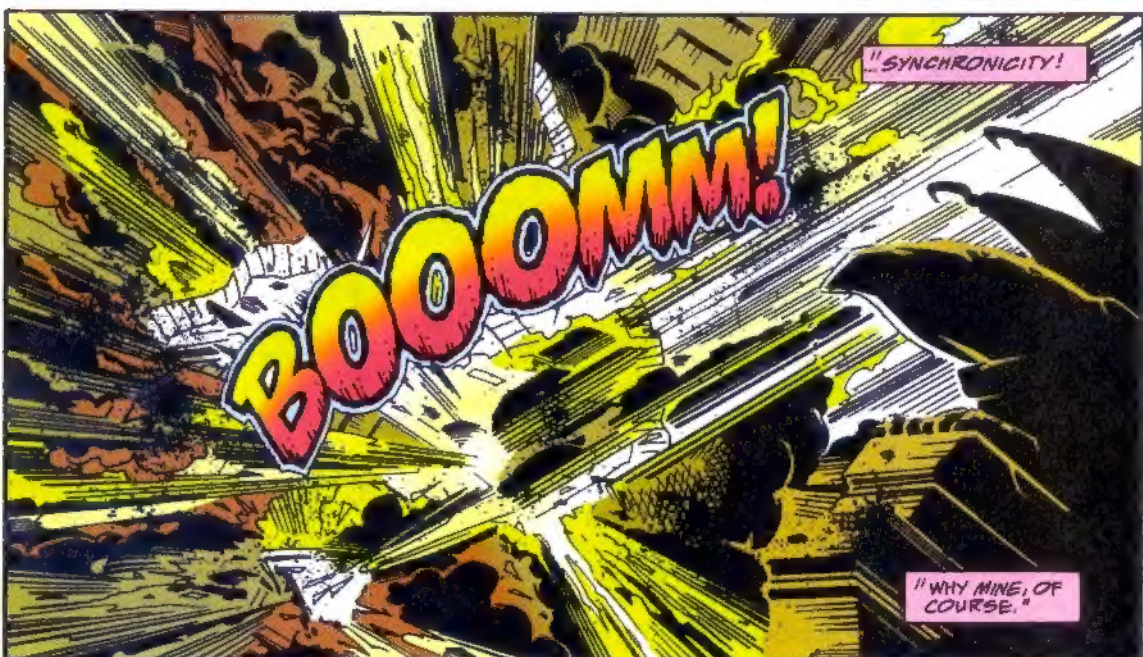
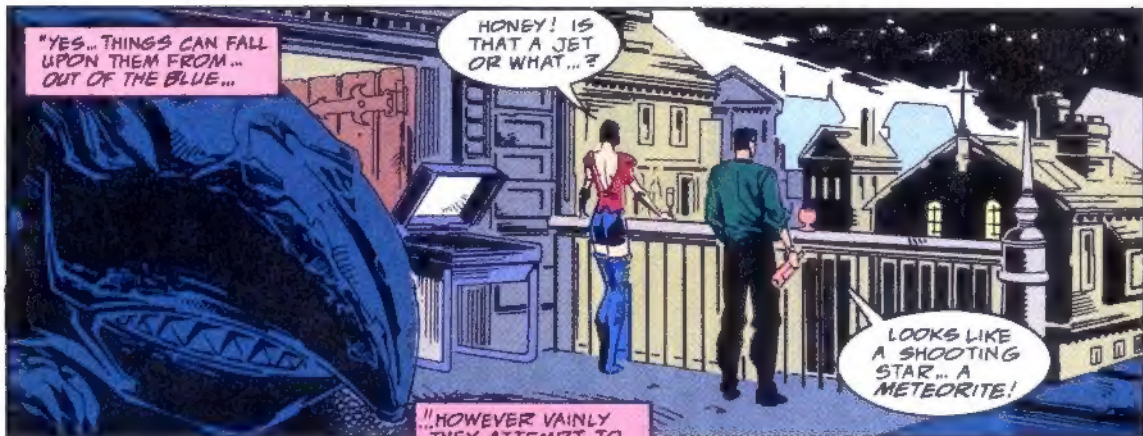


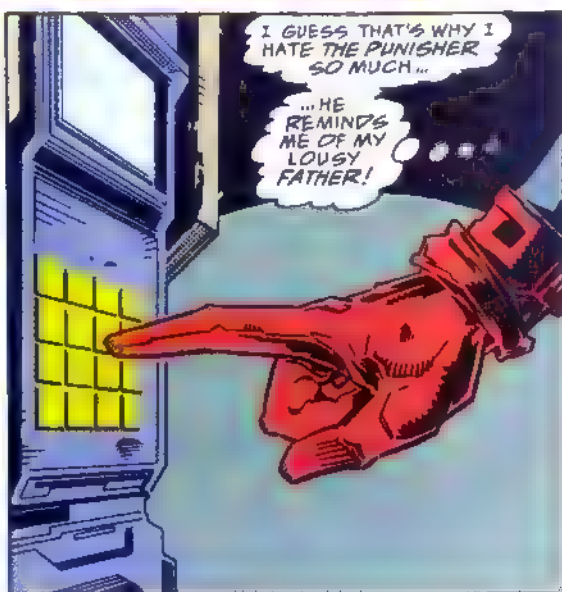
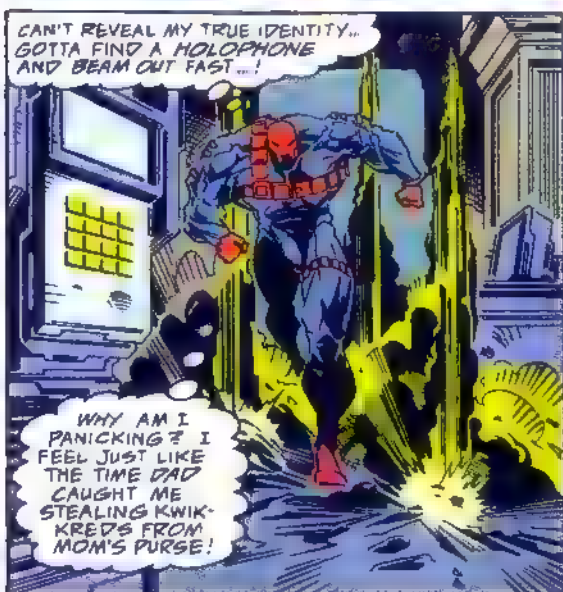
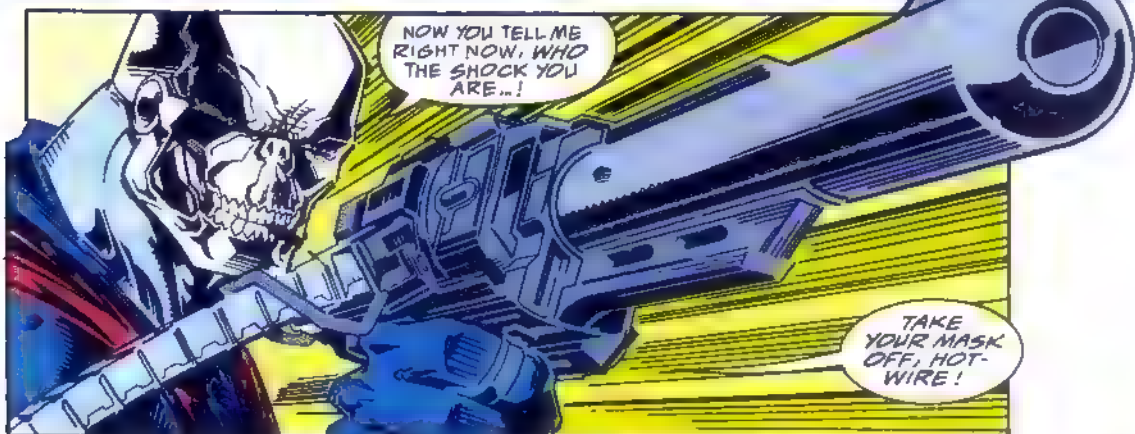
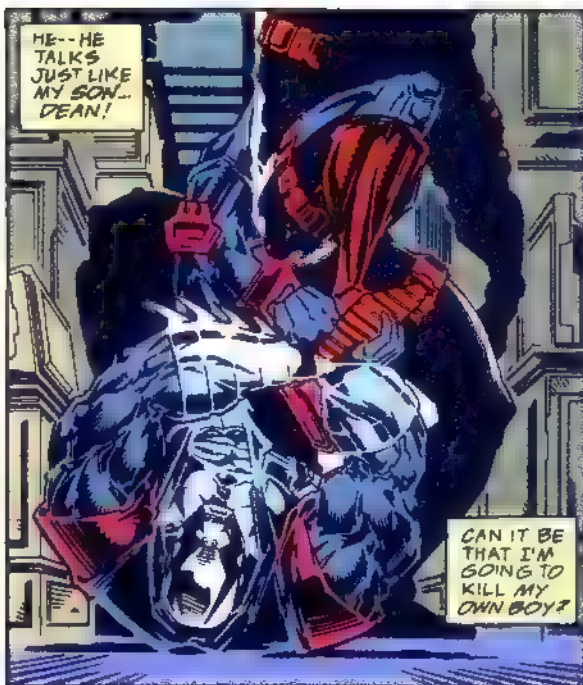
"PEOPLE EKE OUT THEIR OVER-INSURED LIVES... TRYING TO COOON THEMSELVES FROM THE REALITY OF A CHAOTIC COSMOS..."

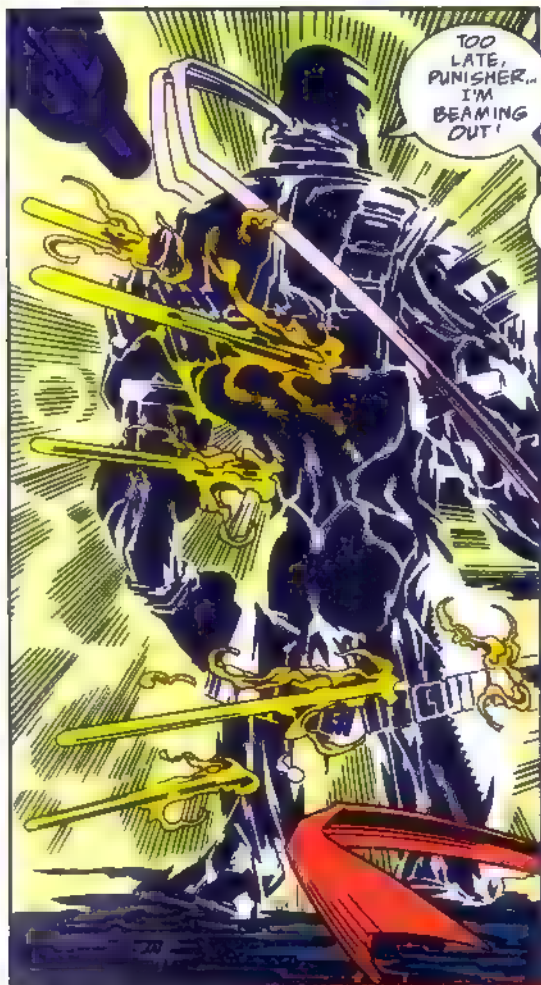
"...THE NOVEL... THE BIZARRE... THE IMPOSSIBLY UN-LIKELY..."

"...HOWEVER..."



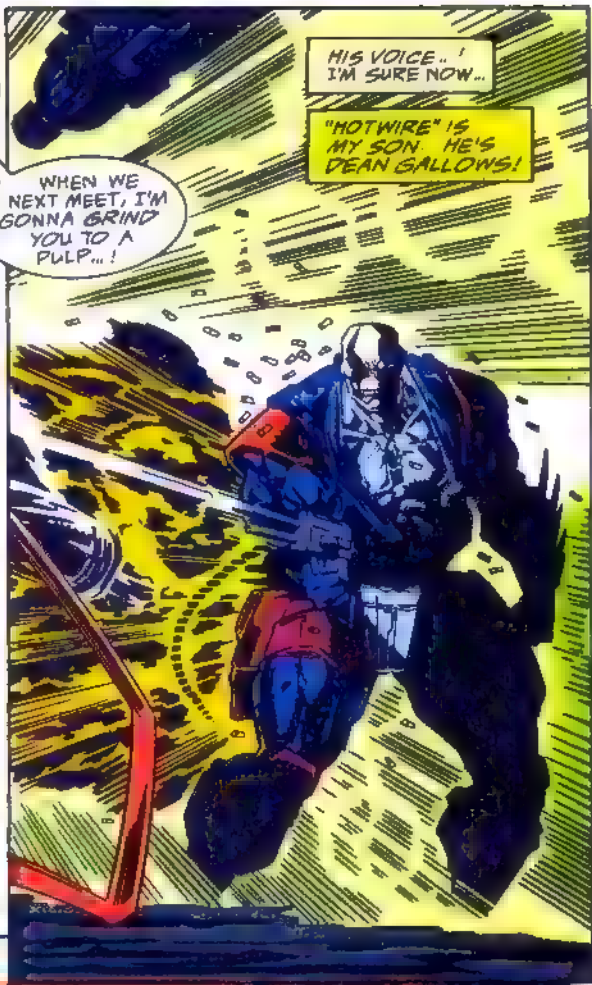






TOO
LATE,
PUNISHER...
I'M
BEAMING
OUT!

WHEN WE
NEXT MEET, I'M
GONNA GRIND
YOU TO A
PULP...!



HIS VOICE... I
I'M SURE NOW...

"HOTWIRE" IS
MY SON. HE'S
DEAN GALLONS!

THE PUNISHER'S
HUMILIATED ME...
FROM NOW ON, NO
MORE BANK JOBS--
I'VE MADE ENOUGH
MONEY.

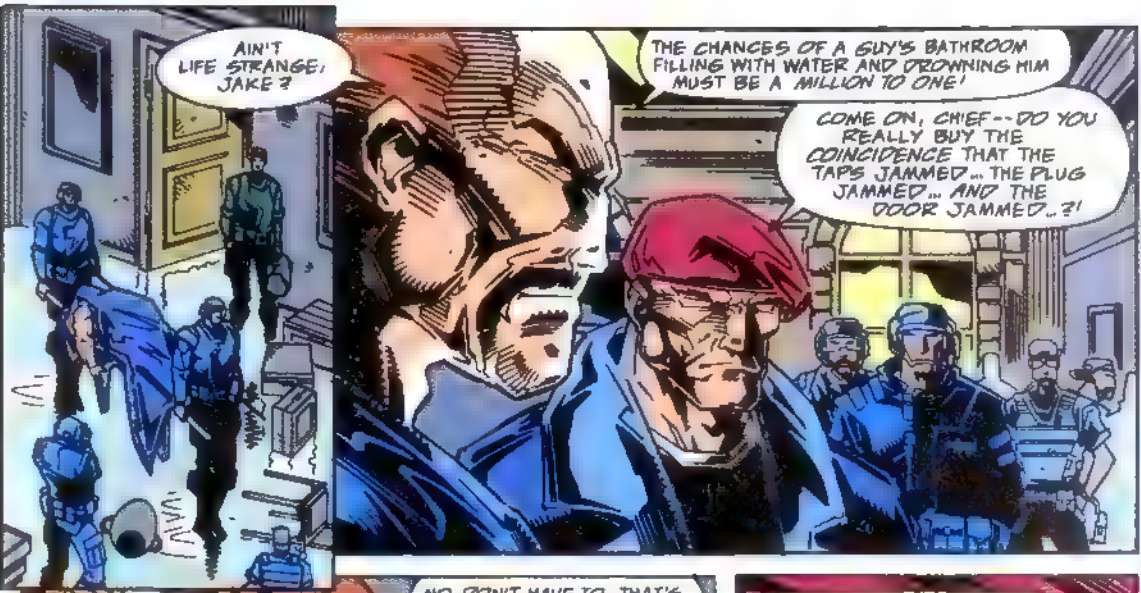
I'M
GUNNING
FOR HIM!

BUT COULD IT REALLY BE DEAN...?
I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD...

YET... NO ONE
COULD HAVE
SURVIVED THAT
ACCIDENT.

ONE DAY
I'LL FIND OUT
THE TRUTH...
WHEN "HOTWIRE"
COMES AFTER
ME AGAIN.






AIN'T LIFE STRANGE, JAKE?

THE CHANCES OF A GUY'S BATHROOM FILLING WITH WATER AND DROWNING HIM MUST BE A MILLION TO ONE!


COME ON, CHIEF--DO YOU REALLY BUY THE COINCIDENCE THAT THE TAPS JAMMED... THE PLUG JAMMED... AND THE DOOR JAMMED...?!



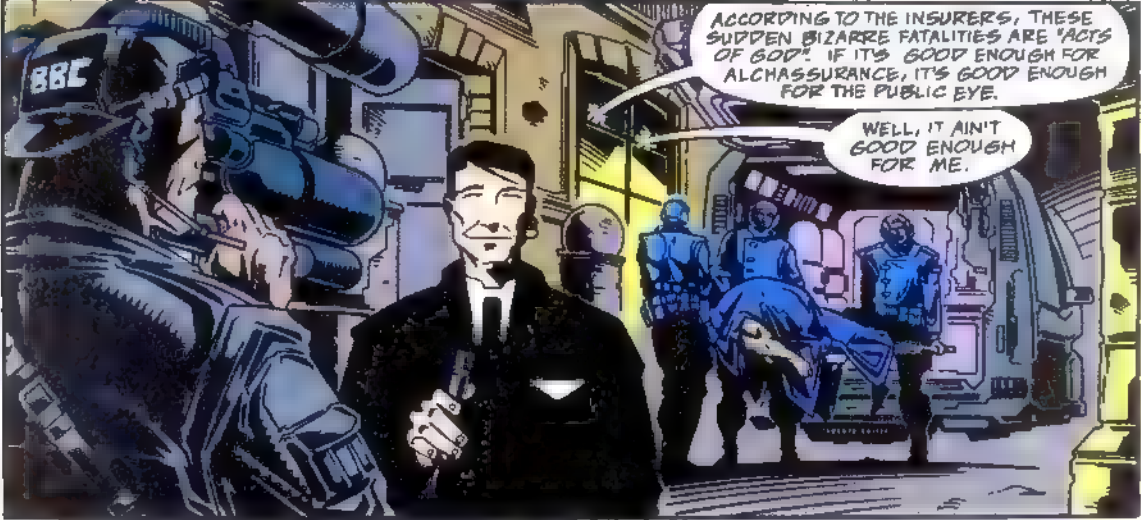
NO DON'T HAVE TO. THAT'S WHAT PATHOLOGY SAID HAPPENED... SO THAT'S MY JOB DONE.

EVEN THOUGH IT'S THE FIFTH DEATH IN MORGUE AVENUE IN FIVE DAYS... IN APARTMENTS ONE THROUGH FIVE?!

THAT'S TAKING COINCIDENCE TOO FAR!



LIKE THE COINCIDENCES CONNECTING MY SON AND HOTWIRE!



ACCORDING TO THE INSURERS, THESE SUDDEN BIZARRE FATALITIES ARE 'ACTS OF GOD'. IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ALCHASSURANCE, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE PUBLIC EYE.

WELL, IT AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

THIS WHOLE AVENUE IS WEIRD. ATTACHED TO A GRADE ONE LISTED NINETEENTH CENTURY GRAVEYARD

NO WAY THIS JUST HAPPENED...
SOMEONE'S BEHIND IT.

WELL, WE DO HAVE ONE SUSPECT... I'D LIKE YOU TO GO AND QUESTION HIM RIGHT NOW...

...THE METEORITE. IT'S UP ON THE TENTH FLOOR. IT'S A BIT OF A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK, BUT GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

IS THAT IT, CHIEF? ALL WE DO IS LAUGH, RIGHT?

NO, JAKE. WE DO OUR JOBS, WHICH IS REASSURING THE PUBLIC THAT THE SKY ISN'T GOING TO FALL ON THEIR HEADS.

EVERY TIME THERE'S A DISASTER WE SET UP AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY. THE SUBSCRIBERS THINK SOMETHING IS BEING DONE.

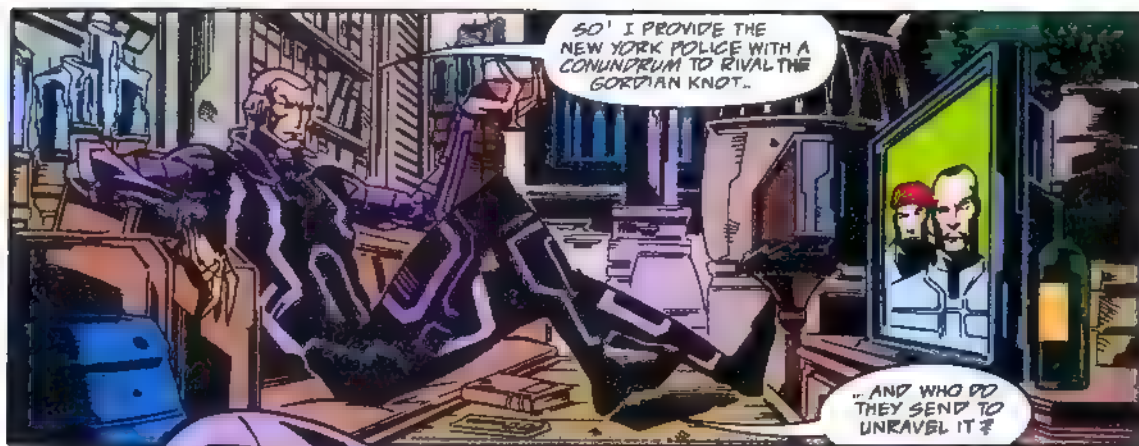
THAT'S WHY WE PICKED A HIGH-PROFILE COP LIKE YOU TO HEAD THE INQUIRY. JUST FOLLOW THE USUAL PROCEDURE OF ALL OFFICIAL INQUIRIES... DO NOTHING.

SORRY CHIEF. CAN'T DO THAT.

THOUGHT YOU'D SAY THAT. HERE--IF YOU REALLY INSIST ON EARNING YOUR SALARY.

WE FED THE ACCIDENTS INTO "BIG BRAIN," THE POLICE MAIN-FRAME. HERE'S WHAT IT CAME UP WITH--IT'S ALL ABOUT SYNCHRONICITY AND PLANETARY CYBERNETICS. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD OF IT.

SINCE THERE'S NO ONE TO BEAT UP OR ARREST, I'M GOING HOME!

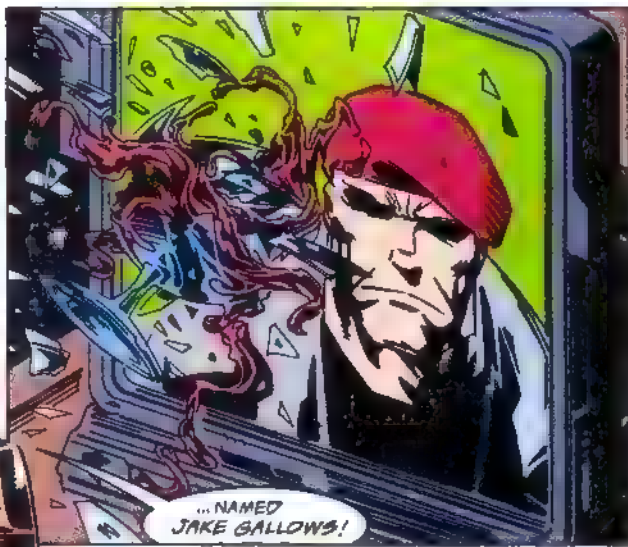


SO I PROVIDE THE
NEW YORK POLICE WITH A
CONUNDRUM TO RIVAL THE
GORDIAN KNOT...

...AND WHO DO
THEY SEND TO
UNRAVEL IT?



A GLOD...
A SO-CALLED
WEAPONS
SPECIALIST...
A FLAT-
FOOT...



...NAMED
JAKE GALLOWS!



WHAT CAN HE KNOW
OF THE ARTISTRY OF QUANTUM
MECHANICS... CAN HE HARVEST
THE NON-ENERGY OF THE SPACES
BETWEEN PULSES AT THE
QUANTUM LEVEL?

CAN HE DISTORT
CAUSALITY GENERATING
SYNCHRONISTIC FIELDS SUCH
AS THE UNIVERSE HAS
NEVER WITNESSED?



I
THINK
NOT...



WELL, WELL... ACCORDING TO MY BRAIN, SCIENCE DOES ACCEPT THAT THE NATURAL FLOW OF COINCIDENCES SOMETIMES CONGELS...

...FORMING AN EDDY OR A VORTEX...

IT'S AN EXTENSION OF THE GAIA PRINCIPLE--DISCOVERED IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY...

...THAT THE EARTH IS A LIVING ORGANISM THAT TWISTS PROBABILITY TO ITS ADVANTAGE TO SUSTAIN ITSELF.

...AND THAT'S WHAT'S GOING DOWN AT MORGUE AVENUE.

BUT LIKE ANY SELF-REGULATING SYSTEM, PLANETARY CYBERNETICS HAVE ANOMALIES. HOWL-BACK CAN OCCUR

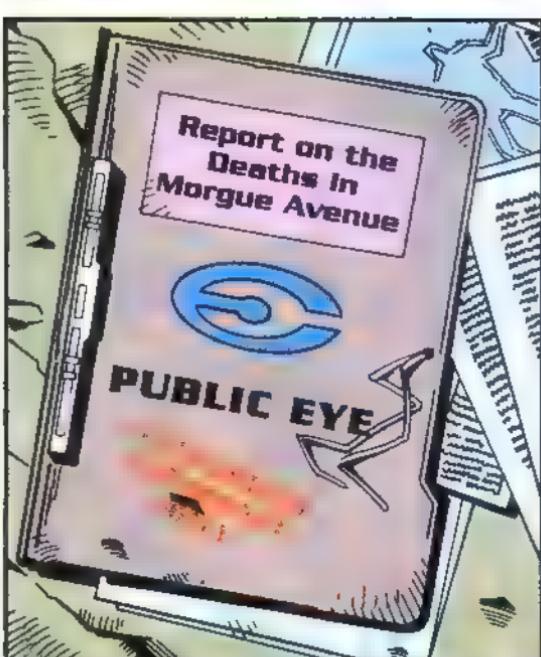
FINE! SO, ACCORDING TO THE COMPUTER, EVERYTHING'S JUST FINE.

BUT I DON'T BUY IT... EVERYONE KNOWS COMPUTERS ARE STUPID...

...AND SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE HAS GOT A MACHINE AND IS DOING THIS... AND THAT MAKES IT MURDER!

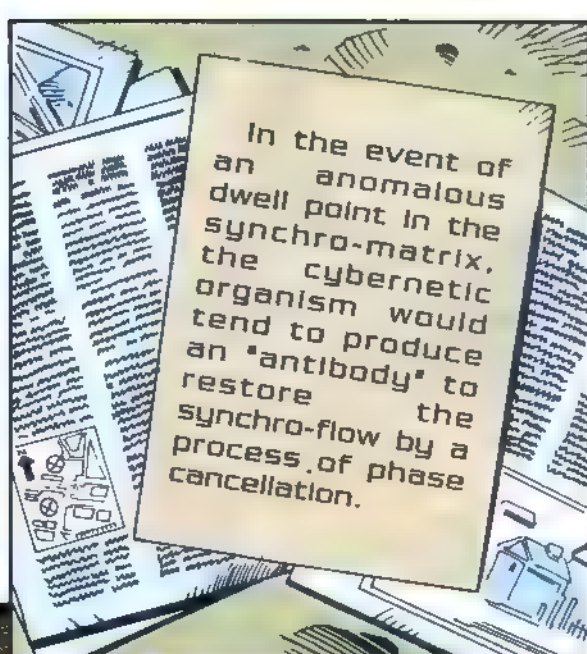
AND IF JAKE GALLOW'S CAN'T DEAL WITH HIM...

...THE PUNISHER CAN!

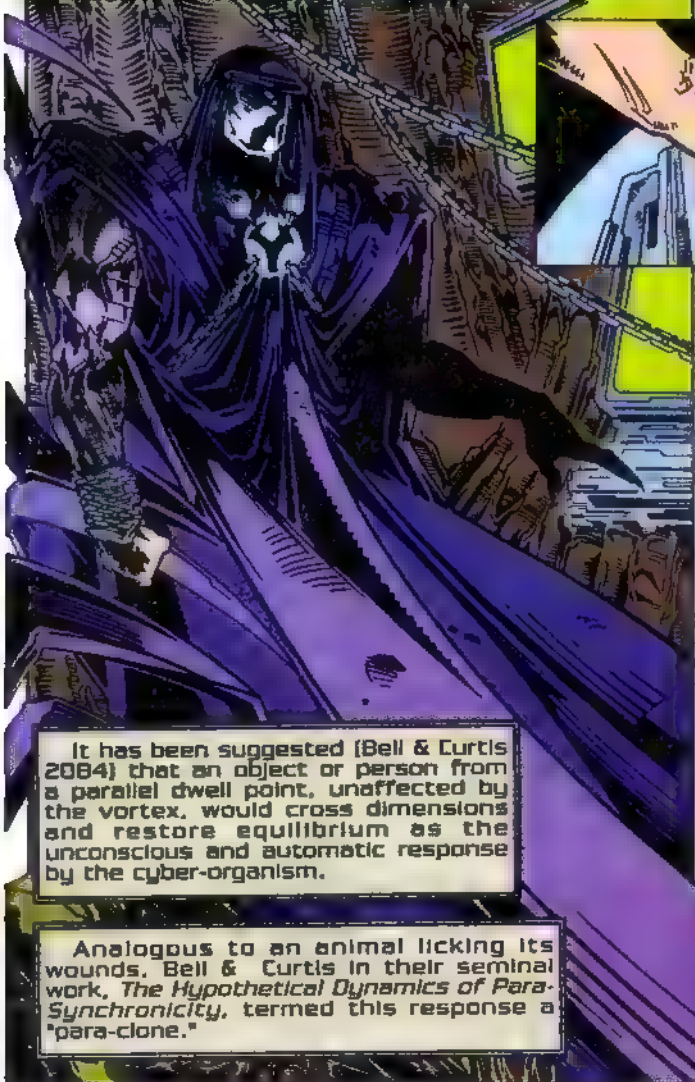


Report on the
Deaths In
Morgue Avenue

PUBLIC EYE



In the event of
an anomalous
dwell point in the
synchro-matrix,
the cybernetic
organism would
tend to produce
an "antibody" to
restore the
synchro-flow by a
process of phase
cancellation.




NO CHOICE.
GOT TO GO
THROUGH THE
PORTAL... AND
CONFRONT...

MY
ALTERNATE
SELF!

It has been suggested (Bell & Curtis 2084) that an object or person from a parallel dwell point, unaffected by the vortex, would cross dimensions and restore equilibrium as the unconscious and automatic response by the cyber-organism.

Analogous to an animal licking its wounds, Bell & Curtis in their seminal work, *The Hypothetical Dynamics of Para-Synchronicity*, termed this response a "para-clone."

But this has been refuted. Such a system would involve a physical intrusion on this reality and --to date-- no such phenomena has been observed.



Also, a living organism passing from one parallel world to another would decay and die as the transition is affected.

EEEEHH!
MUST IGNORE
THE PAIN... MY
WORK COMES
FIRST!

The so-called Para-Clone would be incapable of sustaining its existence in another dimension.

I HAVE
SUCCEEDED I HAVE
PASSED THROUGH
THE PORTAL INTO
THIS PARALLEL
EARTH...

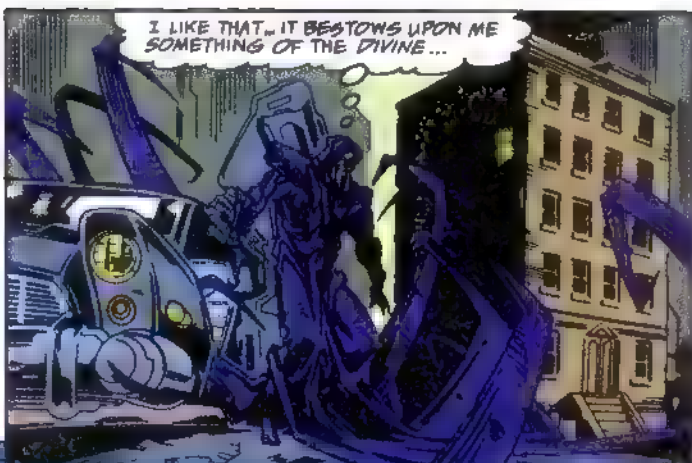
...TO FIND MY
MEDDLESOME
COUNTERPART
AND DESTROY
HIM!

SO
DECEES
SYNCHRON?...

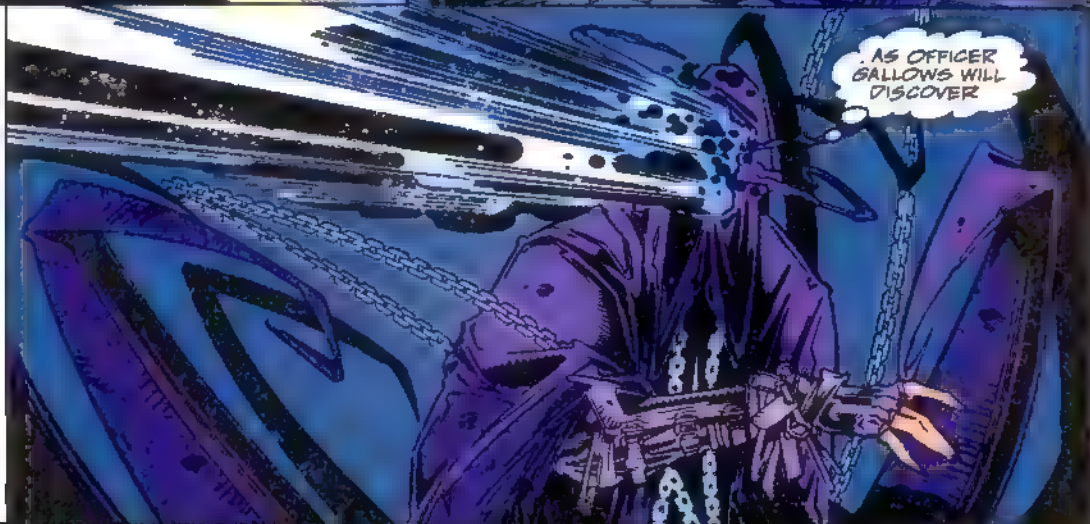
...THE
SYNNER!



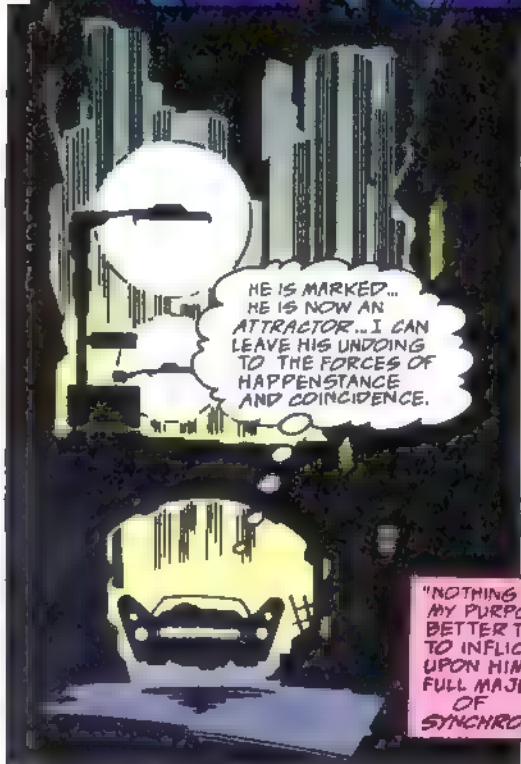
THE INSURANCE
COMPANY CALLS
MY DEEDS AN
ACT OF GOD.



I LIKE THAT... IT BESTOWS UPON ME
SOMETHING OF THE DIVINE...



AS OFFICER
GALLOWES WILL
DISCOVER



HE IS MARKED...
HE IS NOW AN
ATTRACTOR... I CAN
LEAVE HIS UNDOING
TO THE FORCES OF
HAPPENSTANCE
AND COINCIDENCE.



Hmm... STORM'S
GATHERING... WEATHER
CONTROL MUST
HAVE BROKEN
DOWN...

"NOTHING SUITS
MY PURPOSE
BETTER THAN
TO INFLECT
UPON HIM THE
FULL MAJESTY
OF
SYNCHRONICITY!"



ENERGY ACCUMULATORS
IN MY SUIT ABSORBED
IT... JUST!



BUT
LIGHTNING?

TZZZAKK!

OKAY, THOR...
I GET THE
HINT...

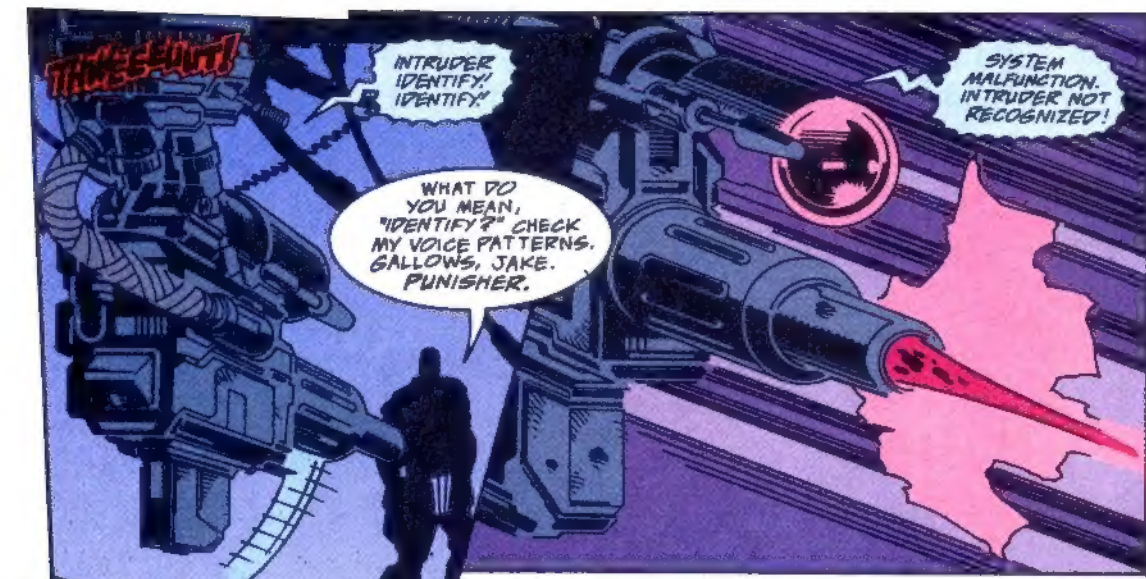
...SO THIS
IS WHAT
HAPPENS TO
LAPSED
THORITES!



BETTER CHECK THAT
THE LIGHTNING
HASN'T AFFECTED
ANYTHING ELSE.



RUN A
HOUSE SYSTEM
DIAGNOSTIC.



THREE-OUT!

INTRUDER
IDENTIFY!
IDENTIFY!

SYSTEM
MALFUNCTION.
INTRUDER NOT
RECOGNIZED!

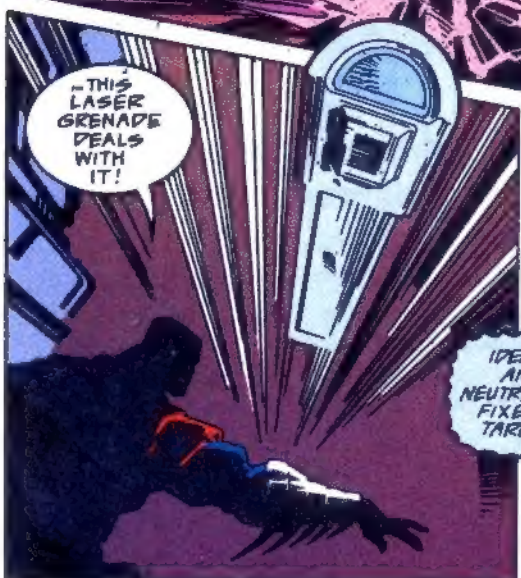
WHAT DO
YOU MEAN,
"IDENTIFY?" CHECK
MY VOICE PATTERNS.
GALLOW, JAKE.
PUNISHER.



WHAT THE
H--? THERE ARE
THREE BACK-
UPS TO THAT
SYSTEM!

THE CHANCES
OF ALL THE SYSTEMS
CRASHING ARE ABOUT
A ZILLION TO ONE!

ABOUT
THE SAME AS
MY CHANCES
OF GETTING
OUT OF THIS
ROOM...
UNLESS...



THIS
LASER
GRENADE
DEALS
WITH
IT!



IDENTIFY
AND
NEUTRALIZE
FIXED
TARGET.

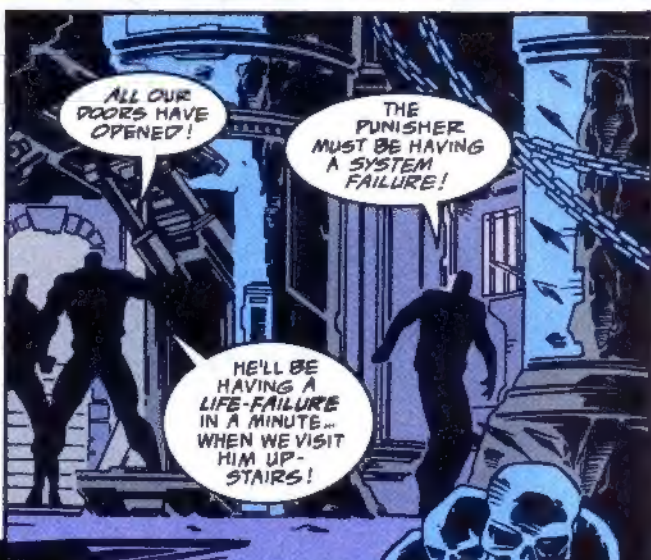
KA-THOOM!



WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW - LUCK'S BACK ON MY SIDE!



HUH...? MY CELL DOOR'S OPENED!



ALL OUR DOORS HAVE OPENED!

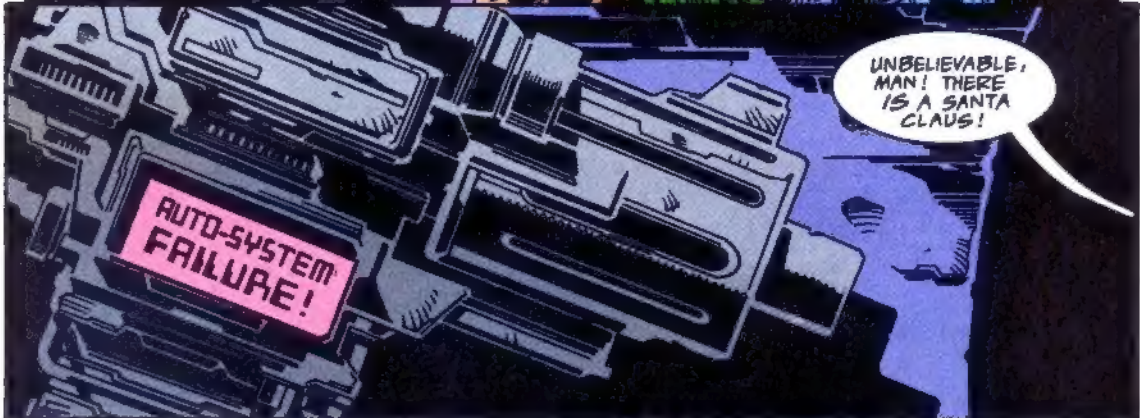
THE PUNISHER MUST BE HAVING A SYSTEM FAILURE!

HE'LL BE HAVING A LIFE-FAILURE IN A MINUTE... WHEN WE VISIT HIM UP-STAIRS!



WAIT A MINUTE, JERK... YOU'RE FORGETTING HIS AUTO-DEFENSES...

...TAKE ONE STEP UP THE STAIRS AND WE'RE CHARBROILED!



UNBELIEVABLE, MAN! THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS!



BAD DAY
FOR YOU,
PUNISHER!

MY BOOT'S
GONNA
MALFUNCTION
YOUR FACE!

GET
READY
TO DIE,
PUNISHER!

NEXT ISSUE:

**FATAL
Attraction!**

BE HERE!